

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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786A.11/2-1957

My dear Mr. Denton:

787.11
The enclosed reports on His Majesty King
Saud Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia and Crown Prince
'Abd al-Ilah Al-Hashimi of Iraq, both of whom
recently visited the United States, are sub-
mitted in answer to the request received by
telephone on February 14, 1957 from Mr. Calla-
way of your office.

Sincerely yours,

For the Secretary of State

Robert C. Hill
Assistant Secretary

Enclosures:
✓ As stated above.

The Honorable
Winfield K. Denton,
House of Representatives.

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His Majesty King Saud ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Saud, tall, stately, and colorful in Arab dress, resembles in appearance his father, the late King 'Abd al-'Aziz, whose throne he assumed on November 9, 1953. Although lacking the imposing strength and political stature of the celebrated former King, commonly known as Ibn Saud, the new King Saud has developed in ability and statesmanship from the time of his first year on the throne when he made frequent emotional and belligerent statements, particularly concerning Israel, to the present when his sense of moderation has been conspicuous in the face of the Suez crisis. Long concerned about and militantly opposed to Communism, King Saud has shown some anxiety over Communist encroachment in countries neighboring his kingdom but has not favored the Baghdad Pact because of what he believes are its political implications -- the furtherance of British interests to the detriment of Saudi interests. With reference to Egypt and President 'Abd al-Nasir, His Majesty has openly proclaimed his support of Egypt in its nationalization of the Suez Canal and has been militantly opposed to the consequent Anglo-French and Israeli attacks on Egypt. On this score he has shown admiration, approval, and respect for the position taken by President Eisenhower. King Saud has been gracious and cordial with American Ambassador Wadsworth in Saudi Arabia and it is expected that he will be pleasant in his personal relations with American officials during his visit to the United States.

In domestic affairs Saud has plans for the development of Saudi Arabia through four broad programs: reorganization of the governmental structure; implementation of a large-scale development program in the field of transportation, agriculture, education, health, and communications; strengthening of the Saudi defense forces; and eradication of corruption in the government. Internationally, King Saud entertains ambitions of becoming a great leader and mediator of the Arab and Islamic world and has made frequent official visitations to Arab-Asian countries. As King of the country which nurtured the Islamic religion, he commands the respects of more than 200 million Muslims throughout the world.

King Saud was born in Kuwait in 1902, was tutored at home, and speaks English and Arabic. He is married and has at least 18 children by various wives and concubines. From 1913 to 1926 he participated in his father's military campaigns and in 1934, the year after he was designated heir to the throne, he led troops on the Eastern Front in the Saudi-Yemeni War. The following year he was made Viceroy of the Nejd and was placed in charge of tribal affairs. During late 1935 and 1936 he traveled in Europe and represented his country at the Silver Jubilee of King George V in London. In 1937 he again traveled in Europe and attended the coronation of King George VI. He made an official visit to the United States in 1947.

January 1957

His Royal Highness Crown Prince 'Abd al-Ilah ibn 'Ali ibn Husayn Al-Hashimi, Regent of Iraq from April 6, 1939, and Crown Prince since the accession to the throne of King Faysal II on May 2, 1953, is the head of the Hashimite family, which was ousted from the Arabian Peninsula by the late King 'Abd al-'Aziz Al-Saud.

The prestige of the Hashimite line lies in its relationship to the family of the Prophet Muhammad. The family has also claimed to be paramount in the defense of Arab unity and nationalism through the activities of the late Sharif Husayn, leader of the Arab revolt during World War I, and his son, King Faysal I, first ruler of Iraq and grandfather of the present King Faysal.

'Abd al-Ilah, who was born in Mecca on November 24, 1914, is Westernized in his political thinking, although not in many of his personal attitudes. He has largely removed himself from the orthodox concept of a Muslim ruler. He is Western in habits of dress, food, and drink. After attending a private school in Jerusalem, 'Abd al-Ilah was sent to Turkey and to Victoria College in Alexandria, Egypt, and then continued his education in England, where he spent a year under the supervision of a private tutor. He speaks English, French, Turkish, and his native Arabic. Married on June 15, 1956 to a daughter of a prominent Iraqi tribal parliamentarian, 'Abd al-Ilah had been married twice before, both times to Egyptians; both marriages ended in divorce. He has two children from his earlier marriages.

February 1957